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For Immediate Release

Governors State Begins \$22.6 Million Science Renovation Project

University Park, Illinois, October 19, 2011 - Governors State University Tuesday celebrated a new era in science education with a ceremony marking the start of a \$22.6 million renovation project. The project will bring world-class laboratories and classrooms to the University Park campus' science buildings.

GSU President Elaine P. Maimon and members of the Board of Trustees symbolically "tore down the walls" of the university's E and F science wing by removing paneling from the walls. They were joined by more than 150 students, university employees, community members, and dignitaries.

"Today, we tear down the walls of the 20th century and construct state of the art science labs appropriate to this model 21st century university and, most appropriate, worthy of our students," Dr. Maimon said.

Dr. Maimon thanked Governor Pat Quinn and the General Assembly for passing "Illinois Works" legislation in 2009, making the renovation project possible. Quinn signed the papers releasing the funds to the Capital Development Board in June, 2010. She also thanked other members of the GSU community -- students, faculty, government officials, and business and community leaders -- for their support and for never giving up on the project.

State Senator Toi Hutchison (D-Olympia Fields) told Tuesday's audience that effective government is the art of the possible, and can lead to "righteous projects" like the renovation of the university's science buildings.

"Illinois needed a capital bill and needed to invest in those things that we share in common," Hutchison said. "When we make investments like this, it's not just good for the Southland. It means that GSU can make a bigger contribution to this state."

Julie Smith, Quinn's deputy chief of staff, said GSU officials are exceptional advocates for the university and the Chicago Southland, and that they showed their effectiveness in winning support for the science building renovation.

"Governor Quinn likes to say that one side of society has movers and shakers and the other side is moved and shaken. Education is the difference between the two sides," Smith said. "I know this project will lead to many more of your students becoming movers and shakers."

The area to be renovated comprises approximately 76,000 square feet of space. The new space will include six research labs, 11 teaching labs, 12 classrooms, nine prep/store rooms, and a new lecture hall that seats 90 students.

During the renovation, crews will replace HVAC, electrical, plumbing, and light systems. Outmoded infrastructure and equipment will be replaced with up-to-date facilities and equipment that will be energy efficient and meet current codes and regulations. The project design calls for structural infill of existing atrium space, adding about 9,000 square feet of additional usable space.

The renovated facilities will serve students and faculty in biology, chemistry, computer science, mathematics, nursing, communications disorders, occupational therapy, and physical therapy.